

HCS SB 727 -- FARMERS' MARKET

SPONSOR: Chappelle-Nadal (Johnson)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Emerging Issues in Agriculture by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill authorizes a state and local sales and use tax exemption for specified farm products sold at a farmers' market. This provision does not apply to any farmer with estimated total annual sales of \$25,000 or more from participation in farmers' markets;

The bill also requires the Department of Social Services to establish a pilot program in at least one rural and one urban area to provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants with access and the ability to afford fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, egg, and honey when purchasing fresh food at farmers' markets. Participants must be able to purchase fresh food with SNAP benefits with an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card and receive a dollar-for-dollar match for every SNAP dollar spent at a participating farmers' market in an amount up to \$10 per week. Purchases of approved fresh food by SNAP participants must automatically trigger matching funds reimbursement into the participant accounts by the department.

The provisions of the bill regarding the pilot program allowing public assistance recipients to purchase fresh produce at farmers' markets will expire six years after the effective date of the provisions.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that farmers' markets are a great place for the community to come together over locally grown foods. By doubling SNAP benefits, this bill would allow all Missourians, regardless of income level, access to fresh, locally grown produce and other food products. Fresh foods are a healthier option and provide more nutritional value than other types of foods.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Chappelle-Nadal; Missouri State Alliance of YMCA's; and Missouri Association for Social Welfare.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that if the SNAP pilot program is a success, they would like to see the program expanded to include grocery stores, but expressed a concern about the inclusion of milk in the definition of farm products.

Testifying on the bill were the Missouri Grocers' Association and

the Missouri Dairy Products Association.